

THE CARGO COURIER

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Wing to recognize top troops tonight

By 1st Lt. James Killen
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Newly promoted Staff Sgt. Daniel Keller, Tech. Sgt. Timothy Baker and Master Sgt. Jason Sanderson will be honored at a banquet in Louisville tonight as the Kentucky Air National Guard's Outstanding Airmen of the Year for 2016.

The three Airmen were selected because of their leadership and performance in their primary duties, dedication to self-improvement, and base and community involvement, according to the Kentucky Air National Guard Chief's Council, which selects the winners.

Keller, the winner of the Airman category, is a combat controller in the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.

In the past year, Keller has used his combat skills to control more than 140 combat sorties, conducted several high-risk special operations missions and become the honor graduate in both the United States Air Force Special Operations Terminal Attack Controller Course and Static-Line Jumpmaster Course.

To highlight the difficulty of that accomplishment; the Static-Line Jumpmaster Course has a 50 percent dropout rate for students.

"Keller was selected to Airman of the year based on his motivation, 'can-do attitude' and his leadership qualities," said his supervisor, Master Sgt. Jair Matis.

"His performance is commensurate with an E-5 or E-6. As an Airman, Keller exemplifies leadership qualities in every aspect we could ask for. Upon completing his Joint Terminal Attack Controller rating, Dan was progressed forward into an instructor role, and has excelled in all aspects of that role."

Baker, the winner of the Non-Commis-

sioned Officer category, is an explosive ordnance disposal flight chief in the 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron.

In the past year, Baker has destroyed more than 1,600 pounds of unserviceable munitions, responded to several threats and potential threats in the region, assisted local police departments with training and manpower, resulting in vital joint relationships, and was instrumental in the design and implementation of a deployed-response trailer, increasing the squadron's on-base response capability.

"Baker had a really good year, and while he was deployed he was one of our top performers," said his supervisor, Chief Master Sgt. Shane Lagrone.

"He has a drive and desire to go above and beyond all the time, and he is always taking control of the younger Airmen, keeping them on track with training and performance."

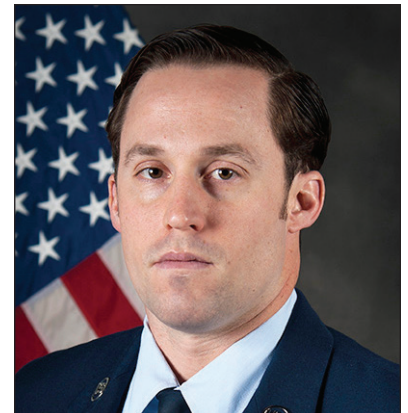
Sanderson, the winner of the Senior NCO category, is an aircraft mechanic with the 123rd Contingency Response Group.

In the past year, Sanderson has deployed in support of AFRICOM and SOUTHCOM operations in Djibouti and Columbia, using his fluency in Arabic and Spanish to instruct coalition partners in aircraft systems and maintenance.

In addition to being a distinguished maintainer, Sanderson has completed his bachelor's and master's degrees and is active in non-profit and religious organizations in the civilian community.

"Sanderson's awards package wrote itself," said his supervisor, Master Sgt. Matthew Hourigan.

"He is truly a leader among men and an honor to work with. The greatest thing that stands out about Jason is his work ethic. I can trust him with anything."



KELLER



BAKER



SANDERSON

123rd conducts joint training in Ga.

By Master Sgt. Phil Speck
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Multiple aircrews and maintainers from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing recently joined with Airmen from the Missouri Air Guard's 139th Airlift Wing to perform annual training in Savannah, Georgia, in preparation for future deployments.

This isn't the first time the two wings have flown together, according to Lt. Col. Matthew Quenichet, director of operations for Kentucky's 165th Airlift Squadron. Both units have deployed overseas together several times, and they expect to do so again. Kentucky contributed four C-130 Hercules aircraft for the Georgia training, which was held Jan. 6-12, while Missouri sent five.

"It's good team building," Quenichet said of the training. "We get a jump on our annual training by going down there. You get everyone away from home so they can focus on annual requirements, airdrops and large-formation flying. We did two formation sorties each day, where crews air-dropped training loads, and we flew three 123rd Special Tactics Squadron members so they could practice High-Altitude, Low-Opening parachute jumps."

New aircraft commanders and loadmasters also received intensive training.

"During events like this in the past, we've trained aircraft commanders that came up from being co-pilots on C-130s, but this year we had five pilots who were previous aircraft commanders on different airframes," Quenichet explained. "They got a lot of good training in Savannah."

Quenichet had high praise for the units'

aircraft maintenance personnel, who attained extremely high mission-ready rates throughout the event.

"They had airplanes ready for us every time we needed them, which is exactly how it is in the desert, where a mission is almost never canceled for maintenance because they have guys climbing all over the planes 24 hours a day."

According to Senior Master Sgt. Chad Chamberlain, production superintendent for Kentucky's 123rd Maintenance Group, the flying effectiveness rate was 100 percent — which means they didn't miss a single scheduled flight.

"This was a great training opportunity for

our younger maintainers," said Senior Master Sgt. Morgan Bramer, flight chief for the 123rd Maintenance Group. "We have a lot of young guys, and for some of them, this was the first field exercise they've ever been on."

Even some of the veteran maintainers saw things they normally don't get to witness.

On the event's last day, both wings flew all their aircraft in a nine-ship formation, taking off together, flying in formation and landing as a group.

Chamberlain and Bramer agreed it was fascinating to see.

"I still get goosebumps seeing that," Bramer said "That was the highlight of the training."



Senior Airman Sheldon Thompson/Missouri Air National Guard

U.S. Soldiers assigned to the 421st Quartermaster Company, U.S. Army Reserve, perform a static-line jump out of a C-130 Hercules over Sylvania, Ga., on Jan. 10. The jump was part of joint training involving aircraft and aircrews from the Kentucky and Missouri Air Guard.

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We welcome your feedback. Please contact the Public Affairs Office directly if you have suggestions for articles or photography. Our office is located in Room 1160 of the Wing Headquarters Building, 1101 Grade Lane, Louisville, KY 40213.

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